

241 annually tilled, though the actual extent varies considerably according
 [311] to the vagaries of the weather, the surplus in the granaries, the availability
 of implements and animals, and other factors. We do not think that in
 present conditions the absence of man-power in the towns is a material
 241 factor. On the contrary the man-power available is more than sufficient
 464 as long as present methods are employed. The introduction of the plough
 has liberated more energy than is absorbed by work among Europeans;
 the number of inactive men has increased rather than decreased. It is
 the shortage of animals and implements, rather than of men, that is most
 impressive. Even European labour and European ploughs and cattle are
 employed by the Natives; they come from the neighbouring farms and
 can do the work more economically than the Native with his inadequate
 resources. But it is not lack of human material, it is the impossibility
 of making the ploughs and animals go round, that necessitates such ex-
 241 pedients. In the companies and partnerships, those who contribute the
 476 essentials, the cattle or the ploughs, are the dominant partners, and the
 others must often wait until late in the season before their needs can be
 attended to. The partnerships thus lead to tensions and strife, and
 hiring of services is becoming more popular. Yet on the whole the
 system works with remarkable smoothness. If it worked perfectly, the
 Natives would realize much more forcibly that it is not lack of industry
 that, as they think, is at the bottom of their troubles, but the inadequacy
 of the land and of their material resources.

231 Although animal husbandry ranks as a very poor second economic
 activity, it is still of sufficient importance to warrant a few remarks even
 in such a general account as this. Pastoral activities are not arduous; in
 the old days they were worthy of the metal of adult men who went armed
 to herd the cattle and supervised the milking. But to-day children herd
 [422] and there are practically no cows to be milked. Cattle are individually
 owned both by men and women, but the kind of ownership, except in the
 case of some 15 per cent., is entirely different from what we understand
 by the word. For the vast majority of cattle are linked to the chain of
munywalu (bride-price) exchanges and as such the individual's rights
 over them are subject to many restrictions. The primary value to the
 [262 Natives of cattle is not economic, but social; he regards cattle as food
 782] only in the last resort, though there is no taboo against killing them.
 Cattle are not killed as sacrifices. Ownership of cattle is not the chief or
 • [554] even a very important method of reckoning status. A man will complain,
 not because he has no cattle, but because he cannot brew beer to maintain
 his prestige. The dung of cattle is used for smearing, cattle that die are
 eaten, and cattle are killed in time of starvation so that the meat can be
 exchanged for mealies. But cattle are, generally speaking, much too
 large units of value to be of use in economic exchanges. Finally, the needs
 of cattle do not determine the routine of the day. They are taken out late,
 after the dew has dried and the herdboys have had their morning meal;
 and they come back almost unnoticed without disturbing the arrange-
 ments of the village. In a sense, however, their needs set limits to the
 harvesting season; crops which are not reaped by the beginning of July
 are practically at their mercy. Yet, despite all this, cattle are regarded

that they are called the *kucvo* of Tshazi. Their history also dates back 571
to the earliest times, when they were Tshazi quite unrelated to the 565
kucvo. They are now and have been since the time of Khiali (c. 1740) 619
the great maternal uncles of the royal group. They have their distinctive
praise-titles and also a distinctive laudatory response. If one of the Mavulana 571
is called by his superior he answers by prefixing his words with the 565
praise *moni*. These laudatory responses (for which there is no generic 554 ●
name) are found only among a few groups. The Raototha say *semula*,
the Crocodiles of Uudupi *myagani*, the *kucvo* *mulemyazi*, the Dipanyika 619
nyya, some Venda (those from Tswale) *sigo*, the Khaya *khenclo*, and the
Lions of Magwale *maan*. This laudatory response honours both the
speaker and the person addressed; and it occurs sometimes in the great
praises of the group—for instance, 'Mavulana of Uutshazi! At Makhifaja,
the place of pasturing, we pasture our cattle in autumn; at Daja it is that
the cattle graze in spring. We are *moni*.' A specific response does not,
however, belong to the whole group. You may hear a *kucvo* say *mule-*
myazi, but, after all, the Tswale also call themselves *kucvo*, and they say
sigo, while the Mahasha, who are *kucvo* *rathole*, may answer *mulovedu*
rathole, and a Crocodile of Uudupi, *uudupi vya manyaka*.

The cluster, such as all the Piga or all the Elephants, never has one
common praise-title. One does not even find a common praise for many
groups or sub-groups, such as the Crocodiles, say, of Uudupi; and the
same is true of most of the groups. The members of some of the groups and
sub-groups use common praise-titles, but the really live praises, those that
stir people and stand as a symbol of their unity, are the district praises.
They are taught in the *vyali* initiation and are sung when beer is brought
by the district to the queen. The district praise may or may not coincide
with the praise of the sub-group or lineage of the head of the district.
The Mudiga of Madumani, for instance, one of the sub-groups of the
Mudiga, identify themselves closely with the royal group, but their
distinctive praise-title refers to the mountain of their district, just as the
distinctive praise of the Mudiga of Mareroni, another district, refers to
the place name as well as to a forebear to whom the district was originally
given. In addition, both Madumani and Mareroni have the old Mudiga
praise, 'You are hemmed in [by lions]' (*le a digwa*). The local district
praise is far more alive than the group or sub-group praise, if it exists at
all, in the case of people living in the district who are not Mudiga, but
Crocodiles or Elephants or Lions and so on. It is thus far more usually
a locality than a group praise, though, with regard to the people of the
lineage of the head, it often is both. The exquisite poetry of these praise-
names cannot easily be rendered in English, '*Uunga vya uuga bula ea na*', the
praise of Levibi, we may translate as 'When it thunders at Uunga, the
rain rains', but we cannot recapture the rumbling of the *u's* nor the
pattering of the *a's*.

Let us look more closely at the Crocodiles. They are by no means 571
a real group at all. At Matsui, where one of them is a district head, they 619
are very closely linked to the royal nucleus; the mother of Matsui was a
relative of Mamujaji the mother of the first Mujaji, and it is at Matsui
that the cow Mamujaji, belonging to the head of the district, is dedicated

Generally speaking, a man's prestige increases as he grows older; but, on the one hand, as his age disables him, practical control gradually passes out of his hands, and, on the other, there is the conflict for position, mentioned elsewhere, between the old and the middle-aged in the royal family. A grand old man like Mavulana is more genuinely respected than the greatest of the royal councillors, and people humble themselves more graciously before him than before even royalty itself. But he lives far from the capital, some five miles over stony places and up a difficult hill, and it is not he, but his sons, who conduct the business of the district with the queen; and of them it is not the chief, but the eldest son, who started earliest on this business and is gradually establishing himself as the next head after the death of the father. In every walk of life, in the supreme councils of the queen, in the struggles for succession to headship of districts, among the wives of a polygynous household, among siblings in a village, the same phenomenon repeats itself. The society values age and experience, sagacity and diplomacy; the claims of age and seniority are validated in kinship terminology, in the precedences accorded the elder brother or sister with regard to priority of marriage or in the initiation ceremonies; but on the whole it is the values of the society rather than its institutionalizations which emphasize the importance of seniority. The society also stresses the hierarchy of rank, such as the status and rights of the chief son, the position of the great wife, and the pre-eminence of the cattle-linked sister, though she be the younger sister. But at the very core of the society there is uncertainty: the heir to the throne is not determined by rigid rules, based upon seniority or legal precedences, and the councillors are involved in a conflict which throws into confusion, at least, the principle of seniority. The total configuration of the society cannot wholly rely upon these devices without damaging the foundations of the sacred kingship. The uncertainty of the succession is the guarantee that the queens are queens by divine decree.

with the *oyali*, but beginning rather later when the grass is sufficiently long to be used for the elaborate costumes worn. As in the case of circumcision, the *oyali*, though of national importance, is held locally by various district heads. Only those heads whose ancestors traditionally have held the *oyali* are allowed to hold it, and control is exercised by the fact that permission (literally, *Ahiso kha mulo*, or firebrand) has to be obtained from the queen by all those wishing to hold a *oyali* by payment of £1. One finds considerable variation from one district to another. In some the *oyali* only is held, their boys having to go elsewhere for initiation into *vukwera*; in others *vukwera* is held simultaneously with the *oyali*, while everywhere there are variations in detail according to the doctor responsible for the initiation or the religious habits and desires of the headman holding the initiation. Hence it is that, while at the royal village men of the last regiment (*mangwa*—Leopards) were in 1939 considered too young to be allowed to enter the enclosure of the girls or the place where the old men sit with their wonderful Bird; in many of the districts they were not debarred at all. At the great opening ceremony, when the gods of whoever holds the school are approached for their blessings, those of the royal *oyali* were merely 'cooled' by the spurling of water and a prayer, whereas those of Relela were propitiated with beer brought to the family graves in the depths of the forest. And while at the royal village the initiates were smeared with the stomach contents of a head of cattle killed by being shot, for those of Relela the tail fat of a sheep ritually killed with a medicated knife was used, the stomach contents being mixed with medicine for strengthening the enclosure. The doctor at the royal ceremony carried all the meat of the slaughtered beasts away on donkeys for his own private use, but at Relela the assembled company, including men, ate the meat with medicine. The institution is sufficiently flexible to allow for changes in keeping with modern needs and modern ideas: six European nails were allowed in the construction of the hut of the Bird, a stipulation being made that they should not be visible, loin cloths of material took the place of hide in many areas and other, more far-reaching innovations differentiated the 1939 ceremony from those in olden days. All the 'schools' do not open simultaneously: months after the queen's *oyali* had begun in 1939, district heads were sending to ask permission to hold theirs, while even in the queen's own *oyali* new initiates were joining as much as five months after the opening. In a society where time is unimportant this is not unexpected.

It is not possible here to give a detailed account of *oyali* ceremonial. Only a few of its most important aspects and main functions will be touched upon. Considerable emphasis is laid in the *oyali* on age and rank. The initiates have to be very respectful towards old men and women, greeting them in a special manner (kneeling and clapping with hollowed hands) whenever they pass them. This general pattern is exactly the same as that found in the *vudiga*, the boys' circumcision. The last initiated regiment is to some extent in authority over the novices. Yet the initiates themselves vary in age from small girls of seven or eight to married women. Indeed, in the 1939 *oyali*, held after a lapse of thirty-five years, it was found necessary to divide the initiates into two distinct

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554 regiments. Each local *nyali* has its office-bearers, whose rank above that of the rest is emphasized in a number of ways. Chief among all initiates is the *mulwet*, the nearest relative of the chief or district head. She represents all the initiates, just as the queen represents the whole tribe, and so intimate is the bond between the *mulwet* and the others thought to be that witches wishing to harm the whole 'school' may do so through her, and in 1939, when a snake appeared in the courtyard of initiates at the royal village, the chief initiate only was 'doctored' and the snake disappeared. She is distinguished from the rest by a special kind of dress and is always given good things to eat by another office-bearer, her 'dog', whose duty it is also to run before her, barking, when the rest are given work to do or are taken to the veld. Another office-bearer is the 'shade' of the chief initiate; towards the end of the initiation, she holds a branch above the latter's head to keep off the sun. There are some half a dozen office-bearers among initiates, as well as among the women in charge; they sit at specially prepared fireplaces and their precedence is recognized in all ceremonial.

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784 The *nyali* is of such importance that during the year that it lasts it overhangs everything else. All men's attention, all men's energies, are taken up by the *nyali*, to which everything else becomes subsidiary. Even in the *khoro*, the forum of the men, only essential cases are dealt with. All marriages are held up: any one having the temerity to take a bride to his home during the *nyali* must pay a fine of one head of cattle and a goat. To such an extent are the attention and interest of the whole country focused on the *nyali* that no rival ceremonial is tolerated. There may be no dancing other than *nyali* dancing, no singing of songs other than those sung in the *nyali*. Even the dancing of possessed people is prohibited, a taboo communicated to the various possessing spirits at a large farewell dance of all the possessed in the area just prior to the opening of the *nyali*, when they are ordered not to manifest themselves and told that none of the usual taboos of the cult will be observed for the next year. It is customary, too, before the opening of the *nyali* for each district head to bring a farewell *gushu* dance to the royal village, but this was omitted in 1938 owing to the length of time it would require. The flexibility of Lovedu rules is illustrated also in the permission which the queen gave in 1938 to people on a European farm who wanted to hold a *gushu* for Christmas, to do so, though for one day only. These rules bind even the spirits who, during the *nyali*, never come to sing and whistle when there is a harvest offering.

881 There is a period of preparation lasting about a month or six weeks in which the initiates are taught some of the songs they are to sing, the manner in which they have to greet their elders, and the way in which debarked wood will have to be collected. Only after this preparatory schooling does the official opening take place. On this occasion the doctor in control of the 'school' strengthens the girls for the initiation by means of special medical treatment and reinforces the courtyard of the chief or district head, where the initiation is held, against the entry of witches who may wish to harm the girls. The initiates are ritually bathed with medicated sticks as at the *gomana*, precedence being given to the

643 connotation, including the conceptions of showing allegiance, doing
 588 homage, paying tribute, honouring, but, above all, supplicating for rain.
 634 District heads *lova* in this way, it is said, in recognition of the land which
 789 the queen has given them to rule; but what is really important is their
 648 dependence, as holders of land of the queen, upon the protection and
 security of her rain-making powers. Ulovedu, her country, is the land
 where persons (i.e. wives) and other possessions are utterly lost (*hu lova*),
 because they are given in exchange for the rain that the queen makes. The
 queen has accepted wives even from the Shangana-Tonga, with whom
 marriage is not permitted, but in that case she hands them to her nobles,
 not as wives, but as daughters; and after a time they become sufficiently
 Loveduized to be given in marriage to commoners. These wives usually
 stay at the capital for a limited time; only a few of them, some six to nine
 to-day, remain permanently; the others are handed chiefly to district
 heads and nobles.

643 While the wives are at the capital they do the work that wives ordinarily
 588 do: they hoe for their husband, the queen, who sometimes accompanies
 them to the fields, they attend to domestic duties, they stamp and brew
 beer, but only two or three of them are sufficiently noble and trusted to
 cook for the queen. The queen is bridegroom to their people and they
 are her relatives-in-law; and even the details of the marriage ceremony
 are maintained. There are variations upon the ordinary pattern of
 [31] marriage and *munywalo*; the *munywalo*, for instance, is less, but what is
 particularly stressed is the virginity of the bride. For a time she wears
 only a loin cloth as evidence that she is not pregnant and a substitute
 must be sent for a girl who has been 'spoilt' before marriage with the
 queen. The first daughter of the district head of Mulloni was 'engaged'
 to the queen, the second to her cross-cousin, a nobleman. The fiancée
 of the queen became pregnant and was rejected, the queen arranging an
 exchange with the nobleman. The same nobleman years ago had been
 'given' a wife by the queen and recently in return, as is obligatory, he
 sent his daughter as wife to the queen. This daughter became pregnant,
 was allotted to another nobleman, whom she deserted, and now stays with
 her father nursing an infant of two years of age. Such complications
 merely throw into relief the ramifications of the system.

643 The queen does not accept 'spoilt' brides and she equally expects that
 588 her wives shall remain chaste, at least for a time. Theoretical insistence
 837 upon chastity co-exists with a realistic attitude to the weaknesses of
 554 human nature. Seduction of a wife of the queen is penalized as if she
 were still unmarried and the daughter of the queen. Pregnant wives,
 unless the queen has authorized the liaison, are disgraced, sent home,
 and returned with beer to wipe out the disgrace, and sometimes an ox is
 slaughtered for the returned wife, the peritoneum being hung round her
 neck to indicate that she is the queen's wife. According to the standards
 of the society, the seducer, as in any ordinary case of seduction, may not
 marry the woman he has seduced; he may not even see his infant child.
 Few of the wives of the queen permanently remain chaste, though it is
 a great honour often very specially rewarded. The great wives, if they
 remain chaste, may be given areas to rule or special villages of their own.

If favoured by one of the great councillors, they could be given their own hut (and in the old days a cow into the bargain) and be allowed to co-habit there with the councillor. This gains for them an honourable place in the capital, where they exercise great influence in the private councils of the queen, intercede for others with the queen and are her companions. *Vafanoni* of high rank may, as mistresses of their own villages, aspire to the great circle of huts drawn by the establishments of their wives, and they may even attain the pinnacle of prestige where, as happens when the queen is barren, they are chosen to bear the heir to the throne. The lesser *vafanoni*, who have remained chaste, may be released from their vows and allowed 'to go about in the bush', and eventually they may be handed out to nobles or district heads. 643 588 837 554

It is, however, contrary to the ideals expressed for a virgin *mutanoni* to be given away, though the ideal recedes before other considerations, such as the poverty of a noble or sympathy in a loss he has sustained. Only some of the *vafanoni* who have illicit children continue to remain at the capital—for instance, there is an old woman who has a married son about forty years old. She had her lapse when she went on a visit to her home, but no one knows who her lover was. The son still lives with his mother at the capital; as a son of the queen, he is not without influence, but his influence is resented. He and his mother are regarded as witches, and he has many enemies and for long periods has to escape to town to allow threatening storms to blow over. Councillors can hardly afford to allow wives of the queen who have sons to remain permanently: the honour is too great and the opportunities of exploiting their position too numerous. The institutional arrangement of sending *vafanoni* with children away to be married to others avoids this danger. The children may, if they are proud, call themselves *Mujaji* and they are described as 'the heads of *Muhale*', but legally they are no longer children of the queen and they lose their opportunities for intriguing. 643 588 578

Through her wives, the queen becomes 'son-in-law' to all her district heads, and by allocating these wives to other district heads and to noble men she becomes parent-in-law to them. The system thus uses the mechanism of the social system to forge a great network of chains radiating from the queen like a web to all strategic points in the society. The link with the queen theoretically never breaks, as a wife handed out must, when she has a daughter, send her in turn to be married by the queen. An important wife, even after allocation, may still enter the queen's hut. The queen remains interested in the welfare of her erstwhile wives and takes them back if the husband ill-treats them or their children. A new link, that of marriage, is created between the people of the wife allocated and of the husband to whom she is given. A man pays no *munywalo* for such a wife, yet the link is a true *munywalo* link; for, if the wife deserts, the husband may, though he has given nothing, demand back *munywalo* from her people (that which the queen gave them). He may complain to the queen, who can, if she wishes, urge his case, but she usually says, 'I can freely give. I cannot return by force.' 643 588 634

How district heads become linked with the queen and with one another may be shown by an illustration which we have greatly simplified for

634 to the queen. A Talerwa group came from the west in Khiali's reign
 563 (c. 1740), had a *muṣanoni* at the capital and were given a large district.
 571 Malematsha, a son of the *muṣanoni*, having married a daughter of Mugodo,
 the next chief, was given half the district, the other half being ruled by
 the Talerwa head. By these arrangements the Talerwa line became
vamakhulu of Malematsha, whose son succeeded to the whole area in
 1895, when the Talerwa ruling family left as the result of famine. The
 Malematsha are *vaguhulu* of the royal Lovedu. At Bagoni, which was
 originally given by Mujaji I to her younger brother, Murwatsṣa, there
 now rules Mukupi, daughter of Murwatsṣa's son. Mukupi had been
 the wife of Mujaji II, but, as there was no living male heir, she was
 released by the queen so as to enable her to rule the area. The true heir,
 son of the girl whom Mukupi's brother, had he lived, would have married
 (for the girl was the brother's cattle-linked cross-cousin), is now about
 forty-five years of age. It is doubtful whether he will ever succeed, for
 Mukupi is an ambitious and important woman, a district head who, like
 the queen, has no legal husband, but several wives; she is related to the
 queen and her councillors in a dozen ways, the most important being
 that she is *mukhadi* of the queen and was wife of Mujaji II. Relela has
 a long history, but we need go no further back than the time when it was
 entrusted by Mujaji I to Mathogani, daughter of Mugodo, the chief, and
muṣanoni of Mujaji I. Mathogani married first Rampi and, after his
 death, Muhotela, Rampi's brother. Kwathi, son of the latter, who was
 given a *muṣanoni* by Mujaji II, for reasons we need not here consider,
 usurped the headship. Segete is a district given by Mujaji II to her wife
 Makhivase, who was daughter of a Venda chief, and, as Makhivase had
 no issue, she was succeeded by her sister's son, the sister having married
 a direct male descendant of the elder brother of Mujaji I. This elder
 brother, Malegudu, had a daughter, Magovo, who became *muṣanoni* of
 Mujaji II. Mujaji III made Magovo head of Maulwi, and Magovo's son,
 Mugodo, was the man who was chosen to raise the next heir to the throne.
 A son of Mugodo by his chief wife (not the queen) is now district head at
 Maulwi. These are but some of the cases, much simplified, that give us
 an idea of the manner in which districts originate and become linked up
 with the queen and the royal group.

634 The district is a political and a territorial unit, often very small in size,
 571 and usually having a distinctive praise. The size varies from half a square
 554 mile to nine square miles, the average in the congested reserve being
 under one square mile. Originally the districts were larger, but, as
 European occupation advanced, the old districts were divided and sub-
 divided to make room for the heads that were ousted. The praises,
 already mentioned elsewhere, are generally praises of the group or sub-
 group of the head. At Maunadala, though he migrated from Naji, near
 Tzaneen in the south, to the tribal farm Khinobelwa to the north of
 Uulovedu, they still sing, 'Crocodile of Mugazi, outcast (*muraka*) of the
 rain water,' because his people had no rain-making magic; when Mahu-
 busana brings beer, the praise runs, 'At the kitchen-hut of Magwala of
 Khodini, where potatoes are eaten,' though Mahubusana now rules
 near the capital, having long ago left Khodini, to the south of Uulovedu;

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and at Khimarala one may hear, 'You are drunk, you of Maleakhotho, you who are habitual smokers of hemp.' Not only have sub-groups and even lineages distinctive variations upon perhaps a common praise of the group, but there are different praises appropriate to different occasions.

Owing to patrilocal marriage, the patrilineal kin tend to form the core of a district. These cores were perhaps more distinct in the distant past, for it is quite clear that, for instance, the districts of the Mudiga lay towards the east, while those of the Mahasha clustered together in the north-west. But members of the Mudiga and Mahasha were always scattered throughout the tribe and never co-operated as groups in any political situation. We must not think of co-operating patrilineal groups, for 'A man has influence and fortune where he has relatives-in-law'. The core of the district may be the brothers, father's brothers, and their sons in the district, but generally the mother is a link with one outside district and sisters and daughters marry into others. There is seldom a numerical preponderance of the lineage of the district head in the territorial unit, their number and solidarity depending upon a large number of factors: length of residence or of headship, the homogeneity of diversity, size, dispersion or concentration of the group that immigrated and was given a district, agreement within the group, and so on.

We may take Matsui as an example. The head, a Crocodile, and his male forebears have ruled the area for over a century. Matsui is at one point immediately adjacent to the capital, but it is also near a whole chain of old Crocodile settlements, which 150 years ago extended from Mamaila in the north to Udupi in the south. The district is largely a valley area and thus avoided by the Lovedu royal group, but extensively occupied by the Shangana-Tonga since about 1840. The population is 22 per cent. Crocodile and 14 per cent. Lovedu; 47 per cent. of the people belong to foreign groups or sub-groups, with whom intermarriage is not wholly disapproved, and 17 per cent. Shangana-Tonga. The Crocodiles are patrilineal kin and the Lovedu are relatives-in-law of the head, but the links with the Shangana-Tonga are those of neighbourliness, some friendship, and some economic interdependence. Of the intermarriageable foreigners, 20 per cent. are related in some way to the head, being mostly relatives of the line of 'messengers' (*diduna*) of the district head. It is generally felt that the messengers should not be patrilineally related to the head because of possible conflicts, but their alliance with the head is usually a close and long-established one. In the case of Matsui, the links are not only through the capital where the group of the 'messenger' used to be officials, but also through the district head's brother, who is the *muquhulu* (cattle-linked sister's son) of the 'messenger'. In other districts, of course, the dispositions are different: on the hills, for instance, there are no Shangana-Tonga and few of the more or less outcast *varoka*. The diversity of the groups is very great, as we have indicated elsewhere, but the manner in which they have been interwoven into the royal group, chiefly through the districts, is even more impressive.

The patrilineal core of the district is no more important than the link through the bilateral kin, especially through mothers and sisters and daughters and the cattle-chains forged by them with other areas and with